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ABSTRACT

Findings of a study to establish the determinants and effects of urban to rural population migration patterns in Osceola County, Michigan, where a 27.6% increase (4,090 people) occurred during the 1970's, illustrate typical effects of population migration turnaround on nonmetropolitan schools. The study revealed that school facilities were strained, requiring use of mobile or makeshift classrooms. Financial problems occurred, primarily in the guise of millage issue defeats. A shortage of teachers, program cutbacks, and curtailment of course offerings resulted. Newcomers contributed to the heterogeneity of the school and community population both positively and negatively. Transiency and turnover became problems while gains in programs to serve newcomers, particularly education-outreach programs for elderly retirees were beneficial. Because the distribution of population growth was largely determined by the amenities within the area, the effects among the four school districts in the county were diverse. Analysis of the Osceola County experience indicates that both quantitative and qualitative data from local communities must supplement secondary data for effective decision making and planning and better cooperation between local, state, and federal groups should serve to help communities experiencing rapid growth make timely and adequate adjustments. (NEC)

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GROWTH AND CHANGE IN NONMETROPOLITAN SCHOOLS: EFFECTS OF THE POPULATION MIGRATION TURNAROUND IN OSCEOLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN DURING THE 1970s

by

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October 1984

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GROWTH AND CHANGE IN NONMETROPOLITAN SCHOOLS: EFFECTS OF THE POPULATION MIGRATION TURNAROUND IN OSCEOLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN DURING THE 1970s

I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings of a study that utilized diverse methods to establish the determinants and effects of the population migration turnaround (hereafter referred to as "the turnaround").[1] Its purpose is to summarize a case study that illustrates the typical effects of the turnaround on nonmetropolitan schools. Anyone interested in growth and change rural schools, social impact assessment, or rural development will find grist for his mill in this broadly-based study and the literature supporting it.

As should be well known to the reader, rural areas in industrialized countries experienced unexpected population growth in the 1970s due to the turnaround (Beale, 1975, 1977; Morrison and Wheeler, 1976). In the United States many of the growing counties were nonmetropolitan, i.e. both rural and not adjacent to an SMSA (Fuguitt and Beale, 1978).[2] The upper Great Lakes and especially northern Michigan contain many such counties affected by the turnaround (Voss and Fuguitt, 1979).

An especially problematical aspect of the turnaround is its impact on public institutions in general and the schools in particular. Schools are among the first institutions to be burdened by rapid population growth (Ross and Green, 1979). It is well worth noting that the turnaround occurs in the context of declining enrollments that are causing school closings in most metropolitan areas. The post-War baby boom has worked its way through the schools. Fewer students are available to take advantage of the existing infrastructure.

Direct effects of the turnaround on nonmetropolitan schools largely derive from changes in school age populations. Indirect effects stem from changes in other segments of the population. For example, an influx of elderly retirees may result in resistance to millage requests, or newcomers with different values may seek institutional changes. Such effects are explored in this report. A review of relevant literature follows.

Research interest in the institutional effects of rapid growth in nonmetropolitan areas increased by leaps and bounds during the last decade. The rise of social impact assessment is part and parcel of the trend (Cortese, 1979). Turnaround in population of the sort observed in Osceola County has not been the primary stimulus for research. Rather, it has been the effects of rapid development of energy and other mineral resources primarily in the western United States (Gould, 1978). Frankena (1980) surveys the literature of nonmetropolitan growth and its effects on communities. The composition of this literature and the place of institutions like schools is explicated in his survey. However, the structure of the survey precludes a systematic look at effects on schools. For this purpose Ross and Green (1979) are more useful.[3] With their summary in mind, relevant works from the more comprehensive turnaround survey are cited below. Parenthetically, the most useful general model for evaluating impacts is provided by Cortese and Jones (1979).

An initial impact of rapid growth on schools is likely to be strain on existing facilities to support increased enrollment (Gilmore, 1978). Overcrowding and associated problems ensue. Overcrowding can be a short-term impact for communities which have the economic and public support to quickly alleviate it with new schools and other capital improvements. For communities unable to initiate satisfactory solutions--the usual situation

in nonmetropolitan areas—overcrowding becomes a persistent problem, sometimes overshadowing all other educational concerns and needs.

Another primary impact of rapid growth is the effect on school finances. School districts in areas with a rapidly growing economy can realize substantial financial benefits through increased local money available to education. However, two associated problems are often difficult to overcome. First, there usually is a lag between the time the services are demanded and the receipt of additional revenues (Cortese and Jones, 1979). Furthermore, it takes time to plan for and build facilities. Growth can overwhelm schools as well as other community services before a proper response can be effected. Second, the risk is present that public support for education can be negatively affected by opposition from urban newcomers with values, ideas, and expectations about education that are different from those in the community (Bates, 1978; Campbell, 1975). Newcomers can be adverse to supporting schools, a disposition evident in the Oregon tax revolt which closed 4 school districts (Hennigh, 1978). But in general, school districts in rapid growth communities stand a better chance of gaining voter approval for school bonds (Ross and Green, 1979).

Rapid growth may also have short-term negative administrative impacts. Rapid student turnover creates a paperwork overload. The information lag, in part due to the high turnover, can further delay a response to overcrowding (Jones and Cortese, 1976). The paperwork load becomes especially acute in areas with new plants and industrial facilities which promulgate many in-and-out students (Ross and Green, 1979).

A secondary negative impact of rapid growth on schools is an associated rise in social problems, including school discipline, misuse of drugs and alcohol, child abuse, and family-related problems (see Bates, 1978). This

kind of impact is more likely in "boomtown" communities undergoing dramatic population and economic growth, where overcrowded and very undesirable living conditions result in a general malaise of increased social pathologies particularly affecting homemakers and youth. These pathologies extend into the school setting (Corrigan, 1976). Transiency of students, an associated problem, can hurt the learning process for all students (Jones and Cortese, 1975). Transient students generally decrease the continuity of school programs and increase the frequency of dropouts (Gilmore, 1976).

On the other hand, long-term social gains from rapid growth may arise in the form of a more cosmopolitan outlook and orientation introduced by new students and their families. Ploch (1978) observed instances of newcomer-oldtimer conflict about required reading and the establishment of family life courses, with newcomers exhibiting more liberal positions. Such conflicts can occur in the community and indirectly affect schools (Sokolow, 1981). In any event, schools often become the lightning rod for discussion of important community concerns (Morris and Morris, 1981). Table 1 lists differences in newcomer-oldtimer orientations and their expected effects on schools. The reader should refer to Morris and Morris (1981:13-18) for a detailed discussion of the newcomer-oldtimer interaction.

The relationship between newcomers and oldtimers in growing communities suggests something fundamental about the nature of turnaround effects. Such change in the character of communities is qualitative. Quantitative indicators cannot alone serve to describe the full range of effects. Cortese (1979) makes this distinction and provides a useful framework for understanding the relative importance of quantitative and qualitative factors in nonmetropolitan growth. The dichotomy is adopted for purposes of this study (see part IV).

TABLE 1

Major Impacts of Rapid Growth and Their Effects on the Social System

Types of Major Impacts in Rapid Growth Communities[1]	Effects of Major Impacts on the School System
Superinflation	Taxpayer revolts resulting in defeat of school bond issues. Housing shortages make recruitment of new teachers difficult. Teachers forced to seek higher paying employment which results in staff turnover.
Service demands exceed service capacities	Double shifts and overcrowding. Lack of after-school care for children.
Increased people problems associated with rapid change[2]	Burnout of professional staff. Increased family problems, lack of adequate parenting, child abuse. Increased alcohol and substance abuse. Increased juvenile delinquency.
Major changes in community culture and social structure	Replacement of local leadership. Oldtimer-newcomer bifurcation often played out in the school setting. "Rip-off mentality" leads to youth devaluing education, higher dropout rates. Changes in student and faculty relationships result from newcomer influx and from students taking on adult responsibilities. Students may be isolated by community.

[1]This portion of the table was adapted from Joseph and Judith A. Davenport, eds., The Boom Town: Problems and Promises in the Energy Vortex. Laramie, Wyoming: University of Wyoming, 1980, by Morris and Morris (1981).

[2]Impacts associated primarily with a combination of population and economic growth.

Rapid growth acts as a catalyst for social change in rural communities and rural education systems via two major factors. The first, significant increase in the student population, is a quantitative change, although it can subsequently engender qualitative changes. The second is the injection of new ideas, expectations, values, and behavior modes, resulting in change in the constitution of the community that is best understood as qualitative.

Morris and Morris (1981) neatly tie the diverse factors and trends affecting rural education together in a typology of impacts. Table 2 is their typology of the ways rapid growth can have an impact on educational needs and services. Their detailed discussion of the typology (1981: 7-12) need not be repeated here. The typology applies to communities experiencing a combination of population growth and rapid economic development. This combination occurs in recreation-retirement communities and energy resource development communities (see Campbell et al., 1980). Osceola County is an example of a recreation-retirement community. Each of the types of impacts is to some extent addressed in this study, although the emphasis is more on social than on economic effects.

II. STUDY METHODS

The use of multiple, complementary methods is a well-known recipe among researchers for honing in on the facts. The present effort adopts this approach. Secondary data in the form of school counts, census figures, and newspaper content are combined with survey data for school officials to provide a more comprehensive picture of change in Osceola County schools. Newspaper content is analyzed for the county weekly, the OSCEOLA COUNTY HERALD. The survey entailed interviews with a sample of school officials from all school districts in the county. The survey generally included the

TABLE 2

Comparison of Newcomer and Oldtimer Perspectives in Rural Communities Confronting Issues of Rapid Growth

Community Issues	Newcomer Perspectives	dtimer Perspectives
1. School Financing	Schools are overcroweded. May have to go on double shifts.	Rising taxes are a concern for persons with fixed incomes. Would vote down a school levy.
2. Community Leadership	New leadership is needed in the community. Old-timer community leaders are insensitive to concerns of newcomers.	Community leaders are old friends who understand my concerns and whom I like and trust. I resent newcomers trying to push them out.
3. Structure of Social Services	The community lacks social and health services in comparison with urban areas. There is a need for professional services.	Local residents are used to doing for themselves, mutual aid relationships with friends and neighbors. Do not want to give up helping networks and replace them entirely with outside professionals.
4. Pace of Life	Used to faster pace. Community seems to be dragging its feet, not making decisions fast enough. Community resists change.	Used to slower pace. Feel unable to cope with rapid change. Newcomers are impatient. They want everything "right now."
5. Rising Prices	Newcomers are being short-changed. We get overpriced housing, food and clothing.	Oldtimers are being short-changed. We get rising prices and taxes.
6. Isolation	Feel isolated from community life. Community networks, clubs, and churches are closed to outsiders. Feel that I don't know anyone. Community lacks social and recreational activities	Feel the need to hang on to some established institutions, keep them off limits to outsiders. Feel isolated. Used to know everyone's name. Now town is full of strangers.

TABLE 2

Comparison of Newcomer and Oldtimer Perspectives in Rural Communities Confronting Issues of Rapid Growth (continued)

7. Business	Need to modernize stores, have greater variety and quality of merchandise. Need more efficient service.	Need to keep friendly, informal atmosphere of downtown stores which serve as gathering places for residents.
8. Community Membership	Newcomers are here because of job opportunities or wanting to live a different kind of life. Not sure if I will stay, settle down in community. Feel used by community which wanted us to come in order to have growth but doesn't really want us to be part of the community. Oldtimers want us to leave.	This is my home. I don't want to leave. I have helped to create this community and don't want the things I have helped to build to be lost. Newcomers downgrade local people and practices. They will leave when a better job comes along.

Source: Morris and Morris (1981).

district superintendent, school principals, and several teachers. Combining and contrasting the two levels of data should enhance the validity of findings.

A separate analysis of the locational correlates of growth detailed in the next section also serves to diversify the study. The tendency of newcomers to settle in particular areas of the county is clearly related to the amenities in these areas. Consequently, quantitative and qualitative change in school districts is intimately tied to their amenities.

The diversity of methods and data sources should be of interest to researchers in addition to the topical results obtained. Although the opportunity to evaluate the various sources of information is not exploited here, the reader will no doubt get some sense of their relative contribution and worth.

An important issue related to the use of secondary data sources is considered, namely the limitation of census data or even school-age population data as a basis for planning for growth and change in nonmetropolitan schools. This problem is largely an extension of the diversity of methods issue just alluded to. Quantitative data alone do not suffice to answer questions involving qualitative factors. Quantitative data also suffer from the limitation of over-aggregation. Very often the only available data are at the township or school district level. Such summary data average the extremes within the geographic unit. Important details can be overlooked or trends left unrecognized. The underlying question is: are variables measured at the appropriate geographic scale for purposes of reaching conclusions about the processes occurring at that level? In this case county-level data may give misleading impressions of what is happening in sub-county units, i.e. school districts. Objective

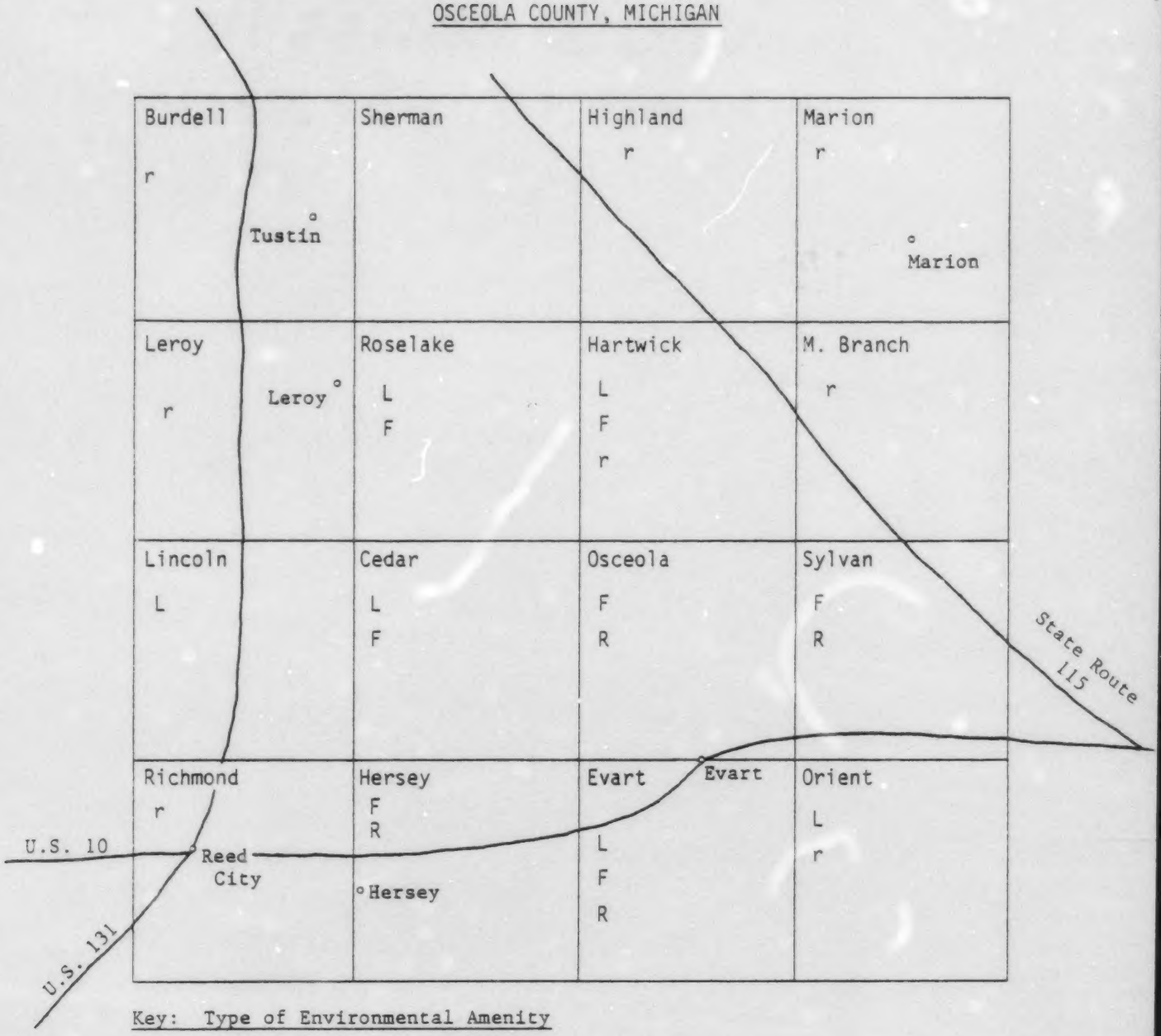
data in the form of newspaper content and subjective data from the reports of those directly in contact with the problem, together balance the analysis, illuminate trends in aggregate data, and provide a sounder basis for planning. The problem of appropriate geographic scale is addressed by an analysis (in the next section) of the distribution of growth using section-level (36 sections to a township) data.

III. ENVIRONMENT, LOCATION, AND GROWTH IN OSCEOLA COUNTY

Osceola County is located in the scenically-rich region of northwest lower Michigan, about 75 miles (121 km) directly north of Grand Rapids (refer to Figure 1). It contains just 6 towns and villages, all of which reported populations under 2500 in 1980. The county is heavily forested and contains numerous lakes and streams. Its central portion is occupied by Chippewa State Forest. Manistee National Forest lies immediately to the west. Accessibility is enhanced by 3 major highways--route 131 (north-south), route 115 (cross-cutting the NE portion of the county), and route 10 (east-west). Consistent with its amenities and accessibility, Osceola County is typical of turnaround communities specializing in recreation and elderly retirement (but has some manufacturing as well). It thus is representative of 3 of 9 types of nonmetropolitan growth mentioned by McCarthy and Morrison (1977), namely influx of retirees, growth associated with recreation, and growth associated with shift of manufacturing to peripheral sites.

The recent demographic change in Osceola County can be described as dramatic. After a minor loss between 1950 and 1960, its population rose by 9% the 1960s, exhibiting very rapid growth in the 1970s (27.6%, from 14,838 to 18,928). Of the 4090 added during the 1970s only 6% accrued to the towns

OSCEOLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN



Key: Type of Environmental Amenity

L = A Large Lake
R = Muskegon River
r = Other Minor River
F = State Forest Land

FIGURE 1. Classification of Osceola County Townships by Presence of a State or Federal Highway, Town or Village, State Forest Land, Larger Lakes, and Major or Minor Rivers

and villages. The turnaround in Osceola County is therefore apparently connected with the attractiveness of its countryside. Although the rate of growth moderated in the late 1970s, estimates show that the turnaround is continuing with vigor there in the 1980s (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1984).

A concurrent study of the locational and environmental correlates of growth (Frankena and Kobernick, forthcoming) utilized health department applications for septic tanks submitted from 1970 through 1978. Findings generally confirm those of previous studies demonstrating the importance of environmental features (particularly bodies of water) and locational factors in population migration. Given the preponderance of growth in the open country areas of the county (94% during the 1970s), the results of this study are relevant to an accounting of turnaround impacts for its schools. The reader is invited to consult the original article for details. What follows is a summary of the findings for quadrants of the county that roughly correspond to its 4 school districts (Figure 2). Figures for housing growth cover the period 1970 through 1978. Figures for population change exclude towns and villages inasmuch as the overwhelming proportion of growth occurred outside central places.

Marion School District (NE quadrant) shows the least evidence of housing growth among the 4 districts. It is not coincidential that it also has the fewest environmental amenities. Hartwick Township housing increased 4.7%, the other 3 townships ranging from 2.5 to 4.0% Of the 4 townships, only Hartwick is blessed with lakes and state forestland as well as a river or stream. The aggregate population of these townships increased 22.3%, also the least among the 4 school districts.

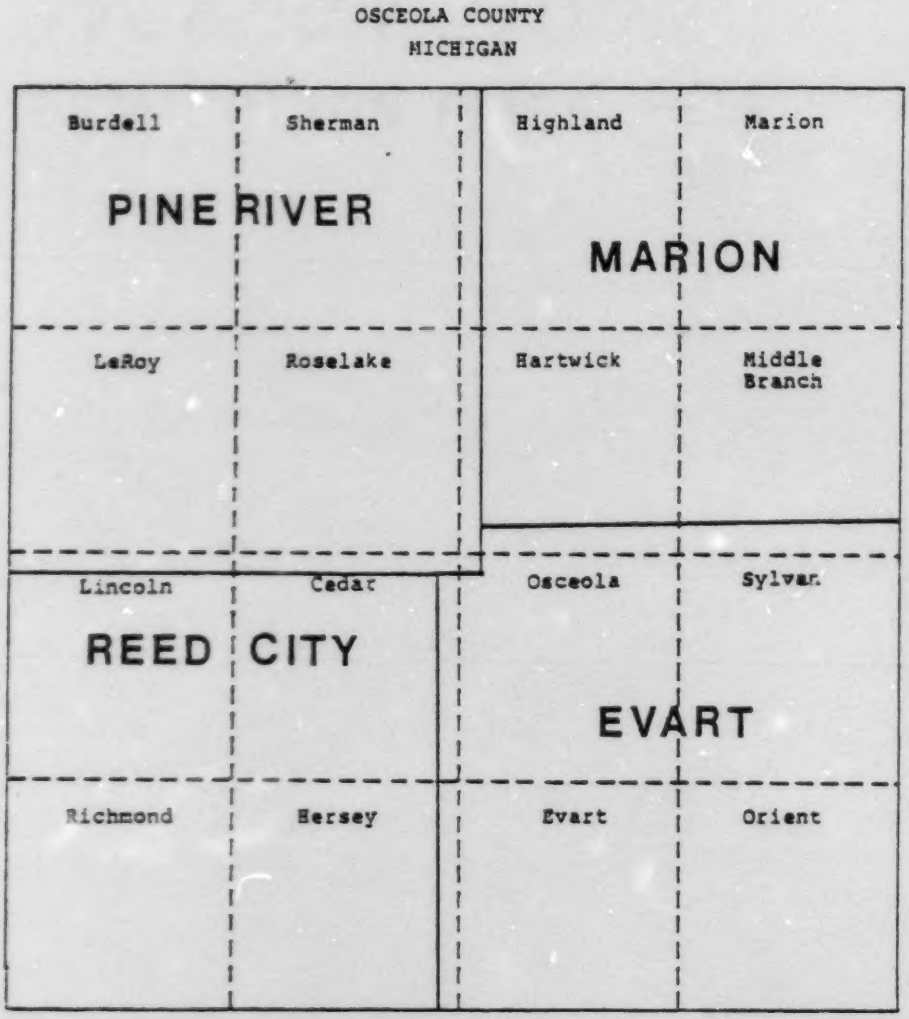


FIGURE 2. Location of School Districts in Osceola County, Michigan

Evart School District (NE quadrant) is better endowed with natural amenities and, accordingly, shows higher growth rates. Housing growth ranged from 5.3 to 9.2%. The latter figure is for Evart Township through which the scenic Muskegon River flows for some distance. Population growth for the quadrant was near the mean for all 4 districts at 44.4%.

Reed City School District (SW quadrant) experienced housing growth rates ranging from 4.6 to 10.4%. Suburbanization of Reed City in Richmond Township is reflected in a growth rate in housing of 8.4%. The Muskegon River flows through adjacent Hersey Township, encouraging a housing growth rate there of 10.4%. Population growth of 49.3% was comparable to the Evart quadrant.

Pine River School District (NW quadrant) housing growth rates ranged from 4.4 to 13.2%. The highest figure is for Rose Lake Township which contains several larger lakes (in particular, Rose Lake) in addition to some state forestland. Population growth here was far and away the highest of the 4 quadrants. None of the others exceeded 50%, whereas Pine River increased 91.4%.

These housing and population data for the 1970s suggest that growth is quite localized and dependent in large measure on environmental amenities and locational factors. Some school districts, in particular Pine River, experienced rapid growth, whereas growth was moderate for adjacent Marion School District. The impact of the turnaround would appear to vary dramatically even at the sub-county level. Comparisons of these findings with student population data and interviews with school officials should be very revealing.

IV. QUANTITATIVE / QUALITATIVE EFFECTS OF THE TURNAROUND IN OSCEOLA COUNTY SCHOOLS[4]

The School System

Osceola County contains substantially all of 4 public school districts (see Figure 2). Each district is administered by an elected board which oversees the operations of its superintendents. School principals in turn report directly to the superintendents. Each school district contains a high school (grades 10-12), middle school (7-9), elementary school (1-6), and facilities for kindergarten. Parochial schools providing all grade levels are available in Reed City or adjacent counties.

Table 3 lists selected characteristics of Osceola County's school districts for the study period. Some of these data, especially the pattern of bond issue elections, are discussed in detail in conjunction with the treatment of newspaper reports.

Student Population Data

The all too common decline in enrollments due to the aging of those born during the post-War "baby boom" barely got going in Osceola County in 1970. St. Philips, a parochial school in Reed City, was forced to close that year because of inadequate numbers of students. The turnaround quickly moderated or reverse the decline in the county's 4 school districts. Population growth included a number of families from urban areas who chose to migrate to the county. The corresponding enrollment increase contrasted sharply with the experience of Michigan as a whole (see Figure 3). The decline engendered by aging of the "baby boom" cohort in Michigan was approached by Osceola County only at the end of the 1970s. The turnaround tapered-off at this time due in part to an economic recession.

The variations in natural amenities that influenced housing and population growth in the country also left their mark on school enrollments.

TABLE 3. Selected Characteristics of Osceola's School District, 1970 to 1979.

YEAR	SCHOOL DISTRICT	MILLAGE RATE			TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENSE		PUPIL/TEACHER RATIO		DROP-OUT RATE	
		ALLOC.	VOTED	TOTAL	PER PUPIL	RANKING*	OSCEOLA	STATE#	OSCEOLA	STATE
1970-1971	EVART	8.2	12.0	20.2	744.92	372	23		4.99	
	MARION	8.2	10.0	18.2	748.55	314	23		5.51	
	PINE RIVER	8.2	15.8	24.0	791.71	217	24	(25)	5.51	(3.91)
	REED CITY	8.2	8.8	17.0	667.97	491	28		6.02	
1972-1973	EVART	8.0	13.0	21.0	885.95	313	23		8.05	(5.04)
	MARION	8.0	10.0	18.0	908.21	261	22		2.69	(4.17)
	PINE RIVER	8.0	14.0	22.0	916.51	240	22	(24)	5.93	(5.04)
	REED CITY	8.0	9.0	17.0	764.08	514	27		5.19	(5.03)
1974-1975	EVART	8.0	15.0	23.0	1101.27	349	22		7.83	(4.03)
	MARION	8.0	12.0	20.0	1052.14	424	22		2.07	(3.97)
	PINE RIVER	8.0	14.0	22.0	1110.56	338	23	(24)	2.93	(4.03)
	REED CITY	8.0	12.0	20.0	935.47	520	26		5.92	(4.61)
1976-1977	EVART	8.0	15.0	23.0	1151.58	438	22			
	MARION	8.0	14.8	22.8	1121.09	476	24			
	PINE RIVER	8.0	16.0	24.0	1215.24	357	22	(23)		
	REED CITY	8.0	15.0	23.0	1070.06	506	25			
1978-1979	EVART	8.0	15.0	23.0	1445.35	448	25			
	MARION	8.0	14.0	22.0	1423.64	468	21			
	PINE RIVER	8.0	16.0	24.0	1518.42	363	23	(22)		
	REED CITY	8.0	15.0	23.0	1360.36	505	24			

*Ranking based upon 529 total school districts in Michigan.

#State comparions made by size of school district: Evart & Pine River 1,000-1,499; Reed City 1,500-1,999; Marion 500-999. Data for 1970-71 drop-out levels were not available by size of school district, thus the comparison is made with all counties along and north of the Bay City-Muskegon line.

Sources: Michigan Department of Public Education, Summary of Expenditure Data for Michigan Public Schools, Bulletin No. 1013, 1971-72 through 1978-79.
Michigan Department of Public Education, Ranking of Michigan Public High School Districts by Selected Financial Data, Bulletin No. 1012, 1971-72 through 1978-79.
Michigan Department of Education, Public High School Drop-outs in Michigan: 1969-70 through 1974-75.
Michigan Department of Education, Michigan Educational Statistics 1970-71 through 1979-80.

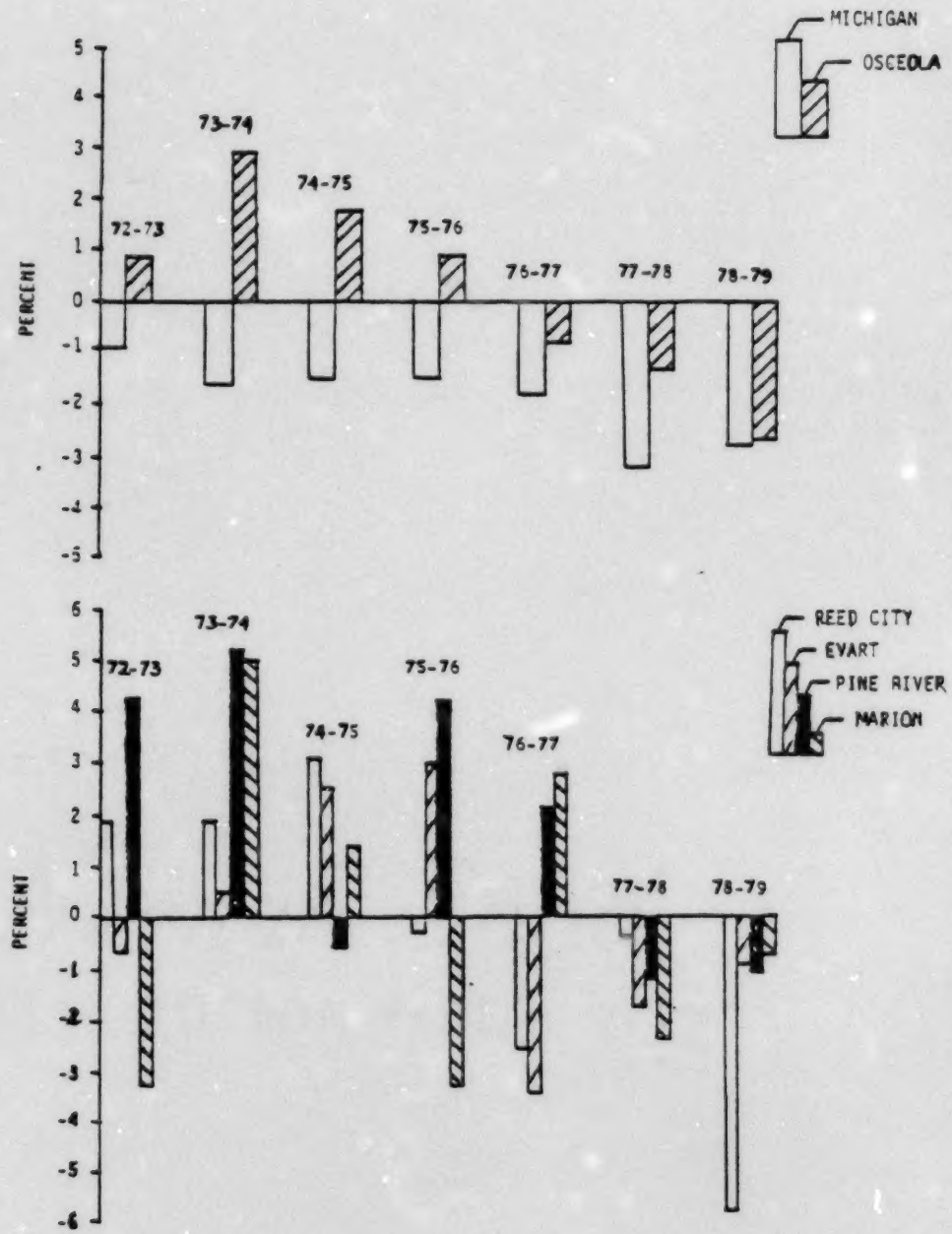


FIGURE 3. Percent Change in School Enrollments, 1972-73 Through 1978-79 for Michigan and Osceola County and Its School Districts.

Districts with greater amenities grew more rapidly or declined at a lower rate during the vagaries of the 1970s. Figure 3 and Table 4 clearly show this relationship. Marion School District, which generally lacks amenities, fluctuated throughout the decade and, in general, declined after 1975. By contrast, Pine River School District experienced significant increases until 1977. Evart is a popular area for retirees, yet showed strong enrollment gains in the mid-1970s. The rate of growth in Reed City School District remained relatively stable at 2-3% per year, but declined rapidly at the tail-end of the 1970s.

Elementary school figures are especially germane to assessing the impact of migration. They better reflect divergence from the state-wide trend. In many downstate urban areas elementary schools were forced to close or to consolidate as a result of sharply declining enrollments. The contrast between elementary enrollments for all 4 school districts and the state is therefore understated. In one district, namely Evart, elementary school enrollments grew well beyond expectation. Even though this area is preferred for retirement, it is evident that the turnaround also brought many families to the community.

In general, school districts with amenities attractive to migrants (most noticeably Evart and Pine River) either remained relatively stable or experienced an insignificant decline. It is important to note that the enrollment declines for 1976-77 through 1978-79 were generally lower than the state average, a fact that points again to the turnaround.

Newspaper Reports

Education and school-related issues were prominently reported in the OSCEOLA COUNTY HERALD during the 1970s. Of the 710 newspaper reports reviewed for this period, 115 (16.2%) dealt with education and schools.

TABLE 4. Percent Change in Public School Enrollment, K through 12, 1971-72 through 1978-79, for Districts Comprising Osceola County, Michigan.

School District	Year							
	71-72	72-73	73-74	74-75	75-76	76-77	77-78	78-79
OSCEOLA COUNTY								
Elementary								
Reed City	-	Ø.4	-1.5	1.1	-1.1	-1.3	-3.Ø	-5.3
Evart	-	Ø.5	-1.9	-2.3	3.2	2.1	-Ø.6	-1.9
Pine River	-	1.4	4.5	-3.6	5.6	-Ø.1	Ø.1	Ø.3
Marion	-	-6.5	2.1	2.5	-3.8	3.1	Ø.6	-2.2
Total	-	-Ø.1	Ø.4	-Ø.5	-Ø.9	Ø.5	-1.1	-2.6
Total N	2,824	2,8Ø7	2,818	2,8Ø4	2,828	2,841	2,81Ø	2,736
Secondary								
Reed City	-	-3.6	5.7	5.1	Ø.6	-3.9	2.1	-6.3
Evart	-	-1.8	3.Ø	7.3	2.7	-8.5	-2.9	Ø.2
Pine River	-	7.6	6.1	2.6	2.7	4.5	-2.7	-2.6
Marion	-	Ø.7	8.4	Ø.2	-2.7	2.5	-5.8	Ø.7
Total	-	2.7	5.6	4.2	1.Ø	-2.1	-1.4	-2.9
Total N	2,489	2,556	2,699	2,813	2,842	2,782	2,742	2,663
Both								
Reed City	-	1.9	1.9	3.1	-Ø.3	-2.6	-Ø.4	-5.8
Evart	-	-Ø.6	Ø.5	2.5	2.9	-3.5	-1.8	-Ø.9
Pine River	-	4.3	5.3	-Ø.6	4.2	2.1	-1.3	-1.1
Marion	-	-3.3	5.1	1.4	-3.3	2.4	-2.8	-Ø.9
Total	-	Ø.Ø	2.9	1.8	Ø.9	-Ø.8	-1.3	-2.8
Total N	5,313	5,363	5,517	5,617	5,67Ø	5,623	5,552	5,399
STATE OF MICHIGAN (In 1ØØØ/, rounded)								
Total	-	-Ø.9	-1.6	-1.5	-1.5	-1.8	-3.2	-2.9
Total N	2,142	2,123	2,Ø89	2,Ø56	2,Ø26	1,989	1,926	1,87Ø

Source: Calculated from Michgian Department of Education data. See also Stanley E. Hecker and Frederick R. Ignatovich, "Michigan Total, Public and Nonpublic Membership Projections Based on 1971-72 through 1978-79 Membership Data," Michigan State University, College of Education, 1979.

Table 5 provides a breakdown by subject of growth-related articles. The apparent interest in educational issues seems to rise and fall with the effects of growth in the schools. Reporting was strong early in the decade, reached its peak in the years 1973-75, and declined precipitously thereafter. In 1974, 26 of the 89 growth-related stories (29%) concerned education/schools.

This section draws upon this data source to paint a picture of growth and change in Osceola County schools. Effects are detailed in 3 categories—millage requests and bond issues, school facilities and programs, and student problems. Given that circulation of the HERALD is greatest in the vicinity of Reed City—the county's largest town—reporting tends to favor problems in the Reed City School District. The selectivity of coverage is a limitation in generalizing from this data source.

Millage Requests and Bond Issues

The rapid growth of population in the early 1970s led to the reversal of longstanding support for school bond issues. Prior to March 1972, voters in the Reed City School District had not rejected one for at least 25 years. That month, 3 school bond proposals were defeated by large margins (OCH, 1972a; 1972b).[5] A year later the bond issue to fund a new middle school was defeated (OCH, 1973a). The result is not dissimilar to that observed by Hennigh (1978) in Oregon. Campbell, et al. (1980) reported that among the types of turnaround communities they studied, the recreational-retirement type had the highest percent of bond issues fail (26% failed and 74% passed).

Notwithstanding swelling school enrollments, Pine River School District voters twice rejected bond issues (OCH, 1973a; 1974a). The rapid pace of

TABLE 5. Growth-Related Articles Published in the Osceola County Herald by Subject Matter and Year, 1970 through 1980.

SUBJECT MATTER	Total	YEAR 1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
sportation												
Number	127	13	16	8	6	14	21	16	14	6	7	6
Percent	18.0	16.9	24.6	14.8	6.1	15.8	23.6	36.4	26.9	10.9	15.2	14.6
ıtion/Schools												
Number	115	15	5	10	17	26	17	6	1	6	4	8
Percent	16.2	19.5	7.7	18.5	17.3	29.3	19.1	13.6	1.9	10.9	8.7	19.5
rnment/All												
Number	112	7	6	10	18	6	9	6	17	15	13	5
Percent	15.8	9.1	9.2	18.5	18.4	6.7	10.1	13.6	32.7	27.3	28.3	12.2
ness/Local												
my												
Number	96	12	3	6	15	16	5	8	7	9	7	8
Percent	13.5	15.6	4.6	11.1	15.4	18.0	5.6	18.2	13.5	16.4	15.2	19.5
:h/Medical Care												
Number	67	4	11	4	2	10	24	5	1	3	-	3
Percent	9.4	5.2	16.9	7.4	2.0	11.2	27.0	11.4	1.9	5.5	-	7.3
ıll Quality												
ife												
Number	68	18	14	6	7	2	2	1	3	8	3	4
Percent	9.6	23.3	21.5	11.1	7.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	5.8	14.5	6.5	9.8
Use												
Number	57	-	2	-	22	5	8	2	4	8	4	2
Percent	8.0	-	3.1	-	22.4	5.6	9.0	4.5	7.7	14.5	8.7	4.9
eation/Leisure												
Number	49	8	4	7	8	7	3	-	5	-	4	3
Percent	6.9	10.4	6.2	13.0	8.2	7.9	3.4	-	9.6	-	8.7	7.3
gious Life												
Number	11	-	4	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
Percent	1.5	-	6.2	5.6	-	1.1	-	-	-	-	2.2	4.9
e/Deviancy												
Number	8	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	3	-
Percent	1.1	-	-	-	3.1	2.2	-	-	-	-	6.5	-
Number	710	77	65	54	98	89	89	44	52	55	46	41
Percent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

ce: Complied from issues of the Osceola County Herald from January 1, 1970 through December 31, 1980.

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change must have come as a surprise to residents of this district. Despite successful passage of a bond issue in 1969 to construct Pine River High School, school officials were forced several years later to make additional requests. Given that school officials had promised that the bond issue of 1969 would be their last such building request, many voters undoubtedly became distrustful.

The turnaround probably contributed to 2 defeats of the bond issue to support construction of a middle school in Reed City School District. Senior citizen groups opposed the school facility because of its scale and cost (OCH, 1972c). Many of the elderly in the district were relatively recent in-migrants.

School Facilities and Programs

Enrollments in the Reed city School District increased by about 48% in the period 1970 to 1976, approximately 21% of which was attributed to the "influx of people from the cities" (OCH, 1976).[6] Six portable classrooms were utilized to accommodate the overflow. The situation was especially acute in the middle school in 1973 (OCH, 1973c). Several of the defeated millage requests were designed to alleviate severe overcrowding in the middle school.

Enrollments in the Pine River School District increased an average of 50 students per school year, in some cases cramping newly constructed classrooms. The bus garage in the village of LeRoy was renovated to provide elementary schoolrooms. Existing elementary school classrooms in the village of Tustin were subdivided. Crowding at Pine River High School was dealt with by conducting classes in lounges, hallways, the cafeteria, and band rooms (OCH, 1974a).

Portable classrooms were also used in Evart and Marion school districts. Elementary schools were particularly susceptible to overcrowding on a year-to-year basis.

School programs suffered in Osceola County as a result of the turnaround. The county's Headstart Program was evicted from its location in Reed City in order to help with the classroom shortage (1974b). The Reed City School District was burdened by a chronic shortage of teachers. The pupil/teacher ratio increased to 28, putting the district at a relative disadvantage. Compounding the problem was the fact that funds per pupil in Reed City schools were then among the lowest in the state (see Table 3). Due to the lack of teachers and facilities, such special classes as art, music, shop and gym were curtailed. Inadequate course offerings in career and special education threatened school accreditation. On top of all of this, the volume of disadvantaged youth among in-migrant families led to the diversion of funds. Meeting federal and state guidelines required the diversion to activities and benefits for needy individuals. Title I funds assisted in, among other things, school lunch programs and student employment. Remedial reading classes and special education programs were initiated during this period.

Student Problems

A rise in the rate of high school drop-outs in Osceola County moved in step with the growth of population. The county drop-out rate for the 1970-71 school year was 12th in the state (Michigan Department of Education, 1971). Furthermore, Osceola County's school district had high drop-out rates relative to school districts of similar size in Michigan (see Table 3). The exception is Marion School District, the one that grew the least

overall. The rapid growth in Pine River School District apparently engendered a response to the dropout problem, for it succeeded in reducing its dropout rate by 1974-75.[7]

There is no direct evidence linking rapid growth due to the turnaround and delinquency. Reports of delinquency surfaced regularly in the HERALD during the 1970s. In Reed City, several stores were forced to refuse admittance to students during lunch hour due to shoplifting (OCH, 1977). During the summer months vandalism became a significant problem (OCH, 1979). Juvenile arrests in the county for all crimes, other than curfew, loitering, and runaway, jumped 70% from 1970 to 1976 (60 to 102) according to the UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS of the Michigan Department of State Police. Comparable rates for Michigan and its rural areas are, respectively, 19% and 25%. Although newcomers encountered conflicts in schools, apparently the vast majority of vandalism was due to students born and raised in the area (OCH, 1975).

Finally, the rise in drug abuse was often blamed on in-migrant students from Detroit. However, drug use was generally on the increase among Michigan youth (OCH, 1970). By 1973 local government officials in the county were moved to urge action of the problem (OCH, 1973d). Funds were allocated and personnel were hired to deal with the traffic in controlled substances (OCH, 1973e).

Interviews with School Officials

This summary of interviews with Osceola County school officials begins with Marion School District, taking the others in clockwise order (see Figure 2). Findings from interviews with parochial school officials round out this account. A brief discussion of salient issues follows these summaries.

Marion School District has grown very little since 1970. In fact, it has been declining in terms of school population since 1974-75. Growth appears to be in nonschool age population, particularly retirees. The district has responded to this group of newcomers by providing enrichment classes and a government-sponsored lunch program. Millage requests have generally met with defeat here in recent years. Retirees tend to vote against, despite the campaign by school administrators to educate them on the small effect it will have on their pocketbooks. Graduates tend to move out and find work in other communities.

Evart School District officials saw the migration stream as consisting mainly of elderly. In-migrants were not regarded as having a significant impact on schools. However, an impact was perceived in terms of turnover in the school population. An estimated 30% are mobile. On the other hand, the elementary school has experienced a slow and steady growth in that segment of the school population. Mobile classrooms were used in the early 1970s. Four additional classrooms built on the elementary school at that time were completely utilized by 1979. Some of this growth is attributed to in-migration. School officials at all levels looked upon the influx of newcomers as detrimental. The migrants were generally of low socioeconomic status (SES) and transient members of the community. Since transients generally do not register to vote, this group of in-migrants does not seem to have affected millage elections. The elderly, except those of low SES who also tend not to vote, usually vote in favor of millages in this district. Millages are generally approved. In-migrants of low SES were perceived to stand out and create significant problems. One official noted that they lack the enculturation of natives. Many who leave schools in large cities because of problems there in fact have problems and bring them

to the district. Single parent families were a growing problem according to elementary school officials. Population growth has not stimulated new programs either for elderly or youth, although elderly do participate in a government-sponsored hot lunch program. Graduates increasingly return to the area in response to industrial development that has created job opportunities.

Reed City School District encountered significant growth in the early 1970s that resulted in overcrowding. Portable classrooms were acquired to accommodate the problem. Along with overcrowding have come the problems of the cities, brought there by in-migrants according to some school officials. The increase has primarily been in elementary and junior high schools. In recent years the school-age population has declined. Reed City schools responded to in-migration of elderly by initiating a community education program in 1975. Educational and travel opportunities were created to meet the needs of elderly residents. As in other districts in the county, recent millage issues have gone down to defeat. Nevertheless, in-migrants again do not seem to stand out as voting against. A millage request for a new middle school has been defeated a number of times. In-migrants were seen as being largely responsible for the need for a middle-school. Problems were also found here with the quality of student in-migrants. In-migrant students having problems were viewed as an undesirable im t from downstate cities. As in the case of Evart School District, more of the area youth tended to return after graduation than was true in the past. Industrial development in the vicinity has helped to make this possible.

Pine River School District officials saw the influx of population as occurring just after the race riots in Detroit, with a subsequent peak attributable to the busing problem. A "weekend father" pattern which began

then was still evident in 1979, although the gasoline shortage that year prompted a reversal of the trend. More typical of the turnaround there are permanent in-migrants. This group has contributed to a substantial growth in the school-age population. Since the new high school was built in 1969, requests for additional millage have consistently gone down to defeat. However, an informant could not attribute this to in-migrants because every group seems to have opposed the higher taxes. Migrants have not been a force for new programs. Enrollments exceeded building capacity of the high school (at 530) during the early 1970s. An informant asserted that for this reason new programs to serve in-migrants could not be afforded. Graduates seemed to be more oriented to the outside than was true of the other school districts, doubtless a reflection of the extreme rural character of this district.

Interviews were also conducted with the officials of 2 parochial schools centered, as you might expect, in Reed City. Both schools achieved enrollment growth in the 1970s that can best be characterized as going from rags to riches. Part of the recent decline in Reed City and outlying public schools is probably connected with growing parochial school enrollments. Neither school official attributed this growth to in-migration. However, both have noticed some newcomers. Instead they saw the growth as stemming from greater participation by locals. One of the officials said that newcomers to the area have been beneficial because they tend to be less narrow-minded than the natives. Dissatisfaction with public education due to problems associated with growth probably fueled the defection from public schools. Trinity Lutheran School nearly doubled its enrollment between 1975 and 1979 to 102 students. But the number of non-Lutherans in attendance

increased by a factor of 7 during this period. The comparable figures for enrollment change in Michigan's nonpublic schools show a decline of 3.5% (Verway, 1980).

The significance of newcomers, especially those from downstate urban areas, is evident in this survey. Yet the effects are not obvious in all school districts. The diversity of effects is great within the county. Marion School District, for example, was largely unaffected by the turnaround during the 1970s.

The change in voter attitudes toward millage increases during the decade is difficult to categorize. Every group seemed to be against raising taxes as the burden of growth became evident. Officials were reluctant to blame the relatively large segment of the population that is elderly. In general, (1) voters of low SES, including in-migrant families, tend not to vote; (2) senior citizens and those on fixed incomes seemed more disposed to oppose tax increases; and (3) households without children in school were much less likely to support school issues. The fact that many in-migrants families with children were of low SES, and thus not motivated to vote for millage requests, was perceived as a problem.

Newcomers to Osceola County schools contributed to the rise of discipline problems. Greater staff time was spent on counseling, probate court, and mental health referrals. Perhaps in part due to rising delinquency problems and demand created by growth, summer recreational activities for youth increased near the end of the 1970s. Appropriations for county parks rose by over 400% during the decade.

Community education activities in the county increased, noticeably in response to the growing number of elderly. Free enrichment classes, lectures, demonstrations, passes to high school athletic events,

recreational trips, workshops offered during government-sponsored hot lunches, and the like, were initiated for senior citizens. An informant noted that up to half of the elderly involved in community education (400 subscribed to the newsletter) were seasonal participants. This group either migrates south or stays indoors during the winter months.

SUMMARY

The experience of the turnaround in the schools of Osceola County has been quite similar to that found in the literature reviewed. Facilities were strained, requiring the use of mobile or make-shift classrooms. Financial problems occurred primarily in the guise of millage issue defeats. A shortage of teachers, program cutbacks, and curtailment of course offerings were caused by the growth. Newcomers contributed to the heterogeneity of the school population and the community, in ways that were both positive and negative. Transiency and turnover have been problems for the districts most affected by the turnaround. There have been gains in programs to serve newcomers, particularly education-outreach programs for the burgeoning population of elderly retirees. Changes have more often been qualitative than quantitative.

The diversity of effects among the school districts in the county is striking. The distribution of growth was largely determined by the amenities within the area encompassed by a given school district. The substantial amenities of Evart and Pine River school districts led to rapid growth and its concomitant problems through most of the decade. Reed City School District experienced rapid growth early in the decade but soon stabilized, declining rapidly toward the end of the 1970s. Marion School District lacks the amenities of the others and, not surprisingly, experienced little disturbance from the turnaround.

DISCUSSION

Planning for and responding to the effects of growth is problematical when growth is largely unanticipated or even unprecedented. The turnaround presents such a challenge to planners and public officials in institutions that provide services to nonmetropolitan areas. How can these officials smooth out the quantitative effects of growth and counteract its negative qualitative effects? Several observations and suggestions that might help to answer this question are offered here.

First and foremost is the idea that quantitative indicators are altogether too limited a basis for decisionmaking. Quantitative data imply a singular, simplified approach to complex problems. The complexity of changes engendered by the turnaround calls for methods which consider qualitative as well as quantitative change. The problems in the schools of Osceola County were not just the burden of more people, but that these were different people. Their divergent values brought change in the form of new demands or behaviors which in some instances created conflict. The fundamental message of this study is that multiple approaches, data sets, and levels of analysis can provide a more complete picture of growth and change.

The fact that change varied widely within the county, both geographically and temporally, ought to stimulate the interest of regional planners. Assuming homogeneity within a region or subregion for purposes of planning, programs, and/or funding projects, could prove far less than optimal. For example, on the basis of county-level data funds could have been allocated to assist the Marion area with growth-related problems (including those in the schools) when in fact, the turnaround had almost no effect there. Planning and programs must be targeted on the basis of

adequate data and information. The use of section- and township-level data to get at the determinants of growth is an approach to consider (see Frankena and Kobernick, forthcoming).

Certainly, census-type secondary data should not be the sole basis for decisions. Some quantitative and qualitative data from the local communities themselves would provide a better foundation for effective decisionmaking.

It is clear that the very rapid growth in school enrollments beginning around 1970 caught school officials by surprise. But it should have been equally clear that the growth would have future implications. The electorate should have been so informed. An informational campaign by school officials especially targeted to newcomers of low SES and to the elderly might have made the difference in some of the millage elections. One school administrator admitted that a poor job had been done of convincing the elderly in his district that the millage increase would have a minimal impact on their tax situation.

Schools appear to have dealt with problems as they cropped up instead of planning for enrollment changes and the problems associated with newcomers. Given the qualitative changes attending the turnaround, school policies should have aimed at assimilating and adjusting new students and their parents to the community. In this effort, links should have been forged with other institutions, such as the Department of Social Services and the Cooperative Extension Service. Indeed, better cooperation between state and federal groups, as well a local interest groups, should serve to help communities experiencing rapid growth to make timely and adequate adjustments (Ross and Green, 1979: 44). At the same time, federal and state policymakers should also be cognizant of the diversity and volatility of

growth. Higher levels of government should encourage local initiatives and responses rather than attempting large-scale programs. The latter militate against the movements toward decentralization and local autonomy that are consistent with the nature of the turnaround.

NOTES

1. The larger study upon which this one is based, i.e., the Community Impact of Nonmetropolitan Growth Study, was funded by a grant from the USDA, Farmers' Home Administration, and by Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station project #1062. A team of 4 researchers led by Dr. J. Allan Beegle (all sociologists by training) observed the institutional consequences of the population migration turnaround in Osceola County beginning in 1979. The author conducted all interviews with school officials, collected the school enrollment data, and summarized both for purposes of the larger study. Special thanks is due Louise Benson for her editorial assistance in preparing this report.

2. The map appended to Ross and Green (1979) illustrates the turnaround for counties of the United States for the period 1970-1975.

3. The background information provided by Ross and Green on the turnaround (pp. 2-4; 9-14) and rural education trends (pp. 5-7) will not be repeated here. The reader is encouraged to consult this work for a basic introduction to turnaround effects in rural schools. For a general overview of change in rural schools, see Edington (1981).

4. The distinction alluded to earlier between quantitative and qualitative data and information is implicit in this treatment. The discussion of student population data and census data represents the quantitative component of the study. Newspaper reports and interviews with school officials provide the qualitative information on turnaround effects in the schools. To the extent that the two sources complement each other, this study reinforces Cortese's (1979) thesis on the nature of social impacts.

5. For purposes of citation the OSCEOLA COUNTY HERALD is hereafter abbreviated to OCH.

6. The discrepancy between this estimate by the district superintendent and the data in Table 4 suggests that the period 1970-1972 was one of strong enrollment growth in the Reed City School District.

7. Data for dropouts ceased to be collected in the middle of the decade, thus limiting further exploration of the connection between the turnaround and the dropout rate.

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